

WASHINGTON, DC—On April 29, 2009, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1913, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, co-sponsored by Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07), by a vote of 249 to 175. The bill extends federal jurisdiction to hate crimes motivated by the victim's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability, and provides assistance to state and local law enforcement to streamline the investigation and prosecution of hate crimes.

“This legislation is about respecting and protecting all Americans, and it is about giving our state and local law enforcement the tools they need to keep our communities safe for everyone,” said Congressman Sestak. “When I served in the Navy, I served to protect the freedoms of all Americans—and that includes freedom from hatred and discrimination. As a Congressman, I’m proud to continue that fight.”

The Hate Crimes Prevention Act:

- Authorizes the Attorney General to provide technical, forensic, prosecutorial, or other assistance in the criminal investigation or prosecution of any crime that: (1) constitutes a crime of violence under federal law or a felony under state, local, or Indian tribal law; and (2) is motivated by prejudice based on the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of the victim, or is a violation of the state, local, or tribal hate crime laws.
- Directs the Attorney General to give priority for assistance to crimes committed by offenders who have committed crimes in more than one state and to rural jurisdictions that have difficulty covering the extraordinary investigation or prosecution expenses.
- Authorizes the Attorney General to award grants to assist state, local, and Indian law enforcement agencies with such extraordinary expenses. Directs the Office of Justice Programs to: (1) work closely with funded jurisdictions to ensure that the concerns and needs of all affected parties are addressed; and (2) award grants to state and local programs designed to combat hate crimes committed by juveniles.
- Amends the federal criminal code to prohibit willfully causing bodily injury to any person because of the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability of such person.
- Amends the Hate Crimes Statistics Act to expand data collection and reporting requirements under such Act to include: (1) crimes manifesting prejudice based on gender and gender identity; and (2) hate crimes committed by and against juveniles.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a

series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of “Deep Blue,” the Navy’s anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the “Global War on Terrorism.” He served as President Clinton’s Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.